

Executive Summary

During the budget crisis that began in fiscal year 2002, Massachusetts cut almost three billion dollars from the state budget. Because women and girls benefit in many significant ways from the work that government does, the funding cuts made between fiscal years 2001 and 2005 have had a significant impact on their lives.

Women and girls are the primary beneficiaries of many of government's essential services:

- In 2003, 68 percent of the students graduating from state colleges were women, and 64 percent of community college graduates were women.
- Sixty-five percent of adults covered by Medicaid in Massachusetts are women.
- More than ninety percent of families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children are headed by women.
- Seventy-two percent of families living below the federal poverty line in Massachusetts are headed by single mothers and thus supports provided to low-income families like housing subsidies and child care disproportionately help women.
- In 2004, seventy-eight percent of the recipients of elder home care services in Massachusetts were women.

This report compares funding levels for various public services today to levels before the fiscal crisis, and describes how reductions in funding have led to reductions in services for women and girls. To determine cuts in constant or "real" dollars, the report provides data in inflation-adjusted terms as well as in nominal dollars. The findings from the report reveal the following:

- Funding for public higher education was cut in real terms by 21 percent between fiscal years 2001 and 2005. In addition to reducing the resources available for public colleges, this cut led to higher student fees as well. Funding for state colleges, where 68 percent of graduates are women, was cut in real terms by \$30.5 million (15 percent) between fiscal years 2003 and 2004, resulting in an increase in average tuition and fees totaling nearly \$780 or 20 percent after adjusting for inflation; that increase followed a 24 percent real increase in the previous school year for these institutions.



- There has been a real cut of 55 percent (\$20.9 million) in the Employment Services Program, a job search and training program for individuals receiving cash assistance and trying to enter the workforce. Almost all of the program participants are women.
- Between fiscal years 2002 and 2005, funding for subsidized child care was reduced by \$31.2 million or 11 percent in real terms. Between fiscal years 2002 and 2003 when funding for subsidized child care was cut by \$10.7 million (a four percent reduction), the number of children served fell from 79,887 to 72,227 (a ten percent decline).
- Specific programs funded by the Department of Education have been considerably scaled back or eliminated. Between fiscal years 2002 and 2004 funding for early literacy was cut by 82 percent. Massachusetts also eliminated support for after school programs and class size reduction, programs proven to provide measurable benefits to girls.
- Between fiscal years 2001 and 2005 the Commonwealth cut funding for Adult Basic Education by \$5.1 million or 15 percent in inflation-adjusted terms. In fiscal year 2004, services were provided to 10,300 individuals – 5,500 of whom were women – while 23,400 remained on the waitlist for Adult Basic Education programs.
- The fiscal crisis led to reductions in benefits, limitations on eligibility, and increased out-of-pocket costs for enrollees in the state's publicly-funded Medicaid health insurance program. Benefits eliminated included coverage for dental benefits for adults, chiropractic therapy and eyeglasses. As there are nearly twice as many women as men participating in the Medicaid program, these health care cuts have had a significant impact on women.
- Cuts in substance abuse services led to the closing of more than half of the state's capacity for residential detoxification, and cuts in HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C programs means that thousands fewer women will be screened for these deadly diseases, and will be at risk of transmitting infection to others.
- Although smoking has a direct link to heart disease and cancer – the number one and two killers of women – the state has almost completely eliminated its nationally-recognized successful smoking prevention program, reducing funding from \$48.2 million in 2001 to \$3.8 million in fiscal year 2005.
- The state had made significant gains in reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy and reducing the infant mortality rate, but since 2001 Massachusetts has cut teen pregnancy prevention programs from \$6.0 million to less than \$1.0 million, and has also reduced funding for other reproductive health programs from \$5.9 million to \$4.5 million in real terms.

